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<http://www.sfgate.com/news/science/article/Mead-keeps-inside-DEQ-in-choosing-new-director-4000454.php#ixzz2BNk2HhhN>
[Matt Mead](#)
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[John Corra](#)
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Mead keeps inside DEQ in choosing new director

MEAD GRUVER, Associated Press
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Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/science/article/Mead-keeps-inside-DEQ-in-choosing-new-director-4000454.php#ixzz2BNk2HhhN>

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Gov. Matt Mead stuck close to home by choosing a veteran administrator at

the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality to lead the agency.

Todd Parfitt was chosen to replace John Corra, who is retiring after nine years as director of the department that enforces state and federal environmental laws and regulations.

While former Gov. Dave Freudenthal looked to private industry and hired Corra, then an executive in the trona industry, Mead hired the agency's No. 2 administrator.

"I think he's really in a good place in terms of understanding the agency, and also understanding the current issues the agency's having to deal with," Mead said of Parfitt.

Parfitt, 51, has almost 20 years of experience with the department, including the past seven years in a dual role as deputy director and administrator of the agency's industrial siting division.

His priorities as director will include adopting new technologies to organize information about environmental permits and making sure the agency is run efficiently, he told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Wyoming can have responsible development without sacrificing the environment, Parfitt said.

"I think that's always going to be the challenge, how do you balance the two?" he said. "You want to work with the regulated community, you want to work with the local community and local governments in those processes."

New areas of development such as targeting deep shale in east-central Wyoming for oil are going to need attention, he said.

"It's something that we need to be proactive with and making sure we're talking with the counties and local governments in terms of impacts they're seeing, and making sure we're talking to the industry as we see issues that may be arising+," he said. "Hey, we've been through this before."

The department has been updating its computer systems, a process that includes setting up a geographic information system that will enable employees to look up on a map where the agency has issued permits in the state.

"Say I want to know what permits are in this area, or what facilities of this type are in this area," he said. "We'd be able to pull that information up."

The information technology upgrades are scheduled to be completed in 2014. The public, too, will eventually have access to the permit maps and could find out what permits the state has issued to facilities in their communities, he said.

State officials including the DEQ have had a rocky relationship with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over the issue of groundwater contamination in the area of Pavillion, where the EPA theorizes that the petroleum industry practice of hydraulic fracturing played a role in some contaminants the EPA found.

The department has "a lot of dialogue" with the EPA and "by and large" has a good relationship with the regional EPA regulators, Parfitt said.

"Now, we don't always agree. And so there will be times when we have to sit down at the table and try to work through our differences. But I would say by and large we have a pretty good relationship," he said.

Along with his duties as deputy director, Parfitt has been in charge of the department's obscure Industrial Siting Division. The division reviews permit applications for the large and otherwise significant industrial projects in the state.

Projects that must get a permit from the seven-person Industrial Siting Council include those with an estimated cost of \$190.2 million or more and wind farms with 30 or more towers. The council has issued only about 50 permits since its creation in 1975.

"So there's not a lot of permitting activity that goes on but there's a lot of activity involved in the development and issuance of permits," Parfitt said.

An Ohio native who went to Ohio State, Parfitt started his DEQ career in Lander in 1992. He moved to Cheyenne in 1996 and has worked in or closely with just about every part of the agency, he said.

He moved back to Ohio in 1999 and was based in Cleveland as director of operations for environmental consultant BHE Environmental. He returned to Wyoming and DEQ in 2001.

Thirty-nine people applied for the DEQ director job. A selection committee interviewed eight candidates and Mead interviewed four of those, according to Mead's office.

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